

BEATTY-CRAMER HOUSE
9010 Liberty Road
Libertytown vicinity
Frederick County
Maryland

HABS MD-1060
MD-1060

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PHILADELPHIA SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BEATTY-CRAMER HOUSE

HABS No. MD-1060

LOCATION: 9010 Liberty Road, Libertytown vicinity, Frederick County, MD

DATES: 1732-42, 1855

PRESENT OWNER: Frederick County Landmarks Foundation

SIGNIFICANCE: The original portion of the house is the oldest known house in Frederick County, and is one of the earliest in the state of Maryland. It is a rare survivor of early colonial vernacular building tradition, displaying a merging of Dutch, English, and early American carpentry techniques.

The Beatty-Cramer House utilizes H-bent construction methods characteristic of New York's Hudson Valley, particularly the Ulster County area. The two-story, bi-level house has three main walls that are Flemish-bonded in a brick-nogged timber frame. The heavy timber framing is unique to Dutch Colonial houses known as H-bent construction, where a series of hand-hewn bents are mortise-and-tenoned transversely into the foundation's sill plate. Other vernacular features include an exposed partition wall made of Dutch biscuit, a handcrafted molded cornice top plate on the second floor, and a collection of different types of wood working techniques from pit-sawn to water-powered machine-sawn floor boards.

DESCRIPTION: The Beatty-Cramer House and its two outbuildings (springhouse and smokehouse) sit approximately 100 yards north of Liberty Road (Maryland Route 26), east of Israel Creek. The two-story, Flemish-bond, brick-nogged, H-bent heavy-timber frame house was constructed between 1732-42, and originally was a bi-level house, typical to Colonial Dutch architecture. A one-story V-notched log kitchen was added to the west elevation of the house in 1855. During the 1850s, it is believed the house's bi-level was converted to a typical two-story house that currently measures 59' x 22.'

The original house (42' x 20') was double-pile constructed and built on distinct bi-levels, which is apparent by the existence of 9" joist pockets on the north wall. The western end room was believed to be the original kitchen on the first floor, and was once 3' lower than the original eastern end room, thought to be a parlor. A 5' framed door space was the historic passageway between these two spaces where steps led down into the

kitchen space. Historic plaster is continuous below in a crawl space, and wood nailers located within the masonry are visible to support the stairs.

A Dutch biscuit partition wall separates the two rooms on the first floor. This vernacular technique is rare although it has been documented in early Maryland houses constructed by Dutch and German settlers. Dutch biscuit at the Beatty-Cramer House has been historically linked to Dutch settlers from Marblehead, Ulster County, New York. This unique vernacular construction method used hand-split 1"x3"x36" boards that were slid into U-shaped channels in between the timber-framed wall. A mud-straw daub caked each board in addition to the wall itself, which was finished with a lime plaster or painted with a lime wash. An exterior fireplace was originally situated on the east end of the parlor, while an interior fireplace was located on the west end of the kitchen to accommodate a jambless fireplace mantel. Due to changes in the house's interior first and second floor plan, both fireplaces were made into interior chimneys.

Historically, a staircase or possibly a crude ladder existed in the southwest corner of the kitchen that led up to the second floor. Continuous plaster in this corner is evident. During the 1850s, a typical winder staircase on the northeast corner was constructed along with a second winder in the 1855 kitchen addition, which was constructed by the Cramers on the northwest corner of the building.

On the second floor, the original Dutch biscuit partition wall was cut open between the historic piles as part of the 1855 alterations. On the east gable end, a 4'-8" doorway is visible, which was the only entrance into this space. Although it is speculative, it is not known if this space was used as living quarters or food storage. This room was also partitioned into two spaces, as seen by evidence of tongue-and-groove wallboards under the existing floorboards. The adjacent room shows evidence of joist pockets that led to a loft space above.

There is an 18'x18' cellar beneath the east end with a bulkhead entry on the south wall. Architecturally, this space has a unique vernacular technique of mud daub insulation that was "biscuited" between the first-floor boards and joists. The west wall of the cellar shows evidence of an opening between the two rooms above.

In 1855, the Cramer family purchased the house and made significant alterations, including removing the original roof and extending the second floor approximately 5' higher from the handcrafted cornice top plate. A one-story, log kitchen addition on the far western end of the house was constructed in 1855. The single room was enlarged into a formal two-story addition above that accommodated two extra rooms. When the second

floor was enlarged, original rafters and joists were reused as studs and other types of framing. Other original 1730-40s handcrafted molding and trim pieces were reused throughout the house as lath boards and studs, and are currently concealed within the walls of the second-story. The west end cellar originally stood on grade. The original kitchen had a 1'5" wide, 11' long wood lintel piece, which was relocated into this west end cellar.

A 2-1/2 story, stone springhouse stands northwest of the house, with an interior water trough that connected to Israel Creek. Architecturally, the outbuilding retains evidence suggesting a jambless fireplace and historical research supports that the springhouse was used as a still and possibly living quarters. A one-story stone smokehouse with a log sill plate is located north of the house in the rear.

HISTORY:

First known as "Dulany's Lot," this plot of land northeast of Frederick was surveyed for Daniel Dulany of Annapolis on May 28, 1724. The lot consisted of 3,850 acres extending from the mouth of Glade Creek south along the Monocacy River's east bank to the mouth of Addison Run and from the river eastward a distance of up to five miles.

Daniel Dulany, a land speculator, began making individual sales of lots within this entire parcel beginning in 1732. Susanna Beatty was conveyed 1,000 acres of land from Dulany's Lot on July 17, 1732. On March 20, 1739, Susanna placed her land holdings in the names of her surviving children. Her son, James Beatty, a tanner, lived for about ten years on the parcel of ground where the present Beatty-Cramer House stands. The will of James Beatty was probated on January 29, 1742/43. After his death, his possessions were divided amongst his brothers and sisters and his brother Thomas purchased the land.

Jeremiah Henry Cramer purchased the property in 1855 and added a single story V-notched log cabin to be used as a kitchen. Later a second story was added above the log cabin to the full two story house that exists today. Cramer owned the property until his death in 1899, when the house was passed to his heirs. The property remained in the J. Henry Cramer family until 1918. After 1918, the property and land went into tenant ownership, leased by a number of tenant farmers, who upgraded the utilities in the building. A rear porch addition on the north wall was one such change added to the house by tenants, and accommodated two auxiliary rooms.

After 1985, the house was abandoned and the Frederick County Volunteer Fire Department considered it for a possible test-burning site. It wasn't until the 1990s that the house's historic integrity and significance was uncovered.

The Frederick County Landmark Foundation acquired the Beatty-Cramer House in 1996. The house, springhouse and smokehouse, along with 2.9 acres, were deeded to the Frederick County Landmark Foundation by Blake Construction Co., Inc. The house is protected under a Maryland Historic Trust easement, although it is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A committee was formed to oversee the slated projects at the Beatty-Cramer House under the auspices of the Frederick County Landmark Foundation.

SOURCES:

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Harmony, Indiana website,
<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/kade/newharmony/cabins.htm#weber>

Frederick County Landmarks Foundation website,
<http://www.frederickcountylandmarksfoundation.org/index2.html>

PROJECT

INFORMATION:

In October 1991-July 1992, the Beatty-Cramer House was documented by historic preservation students at the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering. A Maryland Historical Trust grant funded the project that included limited HABS documentation and large-format photographs. A HABS number was obtained although no information was transmitted to the National Park Service. All University of Delaware documentation can be found at the Maryland Historical Trust office in Crownsville, Maryland.

The Beatty-Cramer House was documented between April 2005-September 2005 by supervising project architect, Corri Jimenez, in cooperation with the house director, Judith Candela, and lead volunteer, Diane Putman. The following volunteers assisted on the project: Mark Andros, Anne Brockett, Jacqueline Candela, Douglas Claytor, Angela Commito, George Evans, Philip Ferrer, Maxine Grabill, Kari Grabinski, Sonja Ingram, Mary-Ellen King, Lois Krysieck, Kristin Leahy, Sarh Polzin, Jason Putman, Tina Roach, and Pam Watson.

Architectural field measurements were completed on the main house, springhouse, and smokehouse to the National Park Service's standards. The documentation consisted of detail interior and elevation drawings of each room along with plans of each floor. Corri Jimenez completed AutoCAD drawings of the north and east elevations of the springhouse, and wrote this report in 2006. Christopher H. Marston, HAER architect, edited and transmitted the documentation.